

# THE TOWN COURIER

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## King Farm Couple Makes a Difference

By PATSY BECKMAN

King Farm residents Nancy and Alan Kaplan have dedicated a decade of their lives to helping those residents in Montgomery County who are less fortunate than themselves.

As a member of Montgomery County's Adopt a Social Worker Program, Nancy Kaplan said she is able to work for a number of programs throughout the community. "I took a class for it, and I am asked to help out wherever I can," she said.

For the last 10 years, six of which have been in King Farm, the couple has teamed with the County's Department of Social Services' (DSS) division to head up the "Project Turkey" program to help those families in need at Thanksgiving.

By creating a drop-off center right on their front porch, Kaplan and her husband, Alan, a physician employed at Bethesda Naval Hospital, work side-by-side for "Project Turkey," and they run the entire operation right out of their home in King Farm.

"Can you believe it all started with 10 families and now we help 125 families?" she asked.

The Kaplans say they are amazed at the amount of donations from

**COMPASSION**

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## City Considers Workforce Housing in King Farm

By CARRIE DIETZ

King Farm could become home to the city of Rockville's first workforce housing under the county's new affordable housing initiative if approved by the Rockville City Council.

Patrick Lacefield, public information director for Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett, said the proposed plan is to convert the rental space in King Farm's Village Center to 49

**WORKFORCE HOUSING**

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## Hoffmann Wins Mayoral Race

By SONYA BURKE



Mayor-Elect Susan Hoffmann gives the thumbs up sign as she campaigns at Lakewood Elementary where Falls Grove residents cast their ballots.

Photo: Barb Bent

City Council member Susan Hoffmann will be inaugurated as Rockville's new mayor at 1 p.m. on November 18 at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre.

Hoffmann won her first term as mayor by defeating Mark Pierzchala and Drew Powell with 2,733 votes, a total of 47.02 percent of the vote, in the November 6 city election. She replaces Mayor Larry Giammo, who was not seeking a fourth term.

Joining Hoffmann on the dais at City Hall will be two incumbents and two newcomers.

Piotr (Peter) Gajewski, founder and director of the National Philharmonic, becomes the first King Farm resident elected to the City Council, winning the most votes of any of his 10 challengers. Gajewski received 3,019 votes, 14 percent of the vote. He said he was "elated" that his hard work paid off.

"I knocked on over 3,000 doors and listened to what my Rockville neighbors are concerned about, and then developed my positions on the issues from the perspective of a potential public servant. I then had a

**ELECTION 2007**

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## Fallsgrove Resident Brings Upstart Restaurant to Town Square

By PATSY BECKMAN

Have you tried Bobby's crab cakes? It has been the mantra heard around Rockville neighborhoods for years about Falls Grove resident Bobby Bloch's crab cakes — ever since the former King Farm resident started making them some 15 years ago, learning the art of cooking in his father's kitchen.

Now you can have them, too. Bloch opened Bobby's Crabcakes in Rockville Town Square last month, bringing with him the recipes he created with his father, Ron, a lawyer who makes his home in King Farm with his



Bobby Bloch is the owner of Bobby's Crabcakes — one of the newest Town Square restaurants. His parents, Ron and Mary of King Farm, and wife, Sari, are looking forward to serving Rockville customers.

Photo by Barb Bent

**CRAB CAKES**

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**CLASSIC CARS**

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**VALUABLE VOLUNTEER**

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**KING FARM LINEMAN**

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## ■ CRAB CAKES

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wife, Mary.

After spending years in the food-service industry as a "food and wine guy," Bobby Bloch listened as friends and family, who tasted his crab cakes, nudged him to open up his own place and sell his cuisine full-time. "You ought to sell these," Mary recalls hearing people tell her son.

But every time he seriously thought about going at it alone, he got cold feet.

It wasn't until he spent a Fourth of July picnicking in Annapolis — a town that knows good crab cakes — that he decided the timing was finally right: He met Scott Ross of Ross Development and Investments there, and the two men talked about the Town Square project. "I loved the concept," said Bloch about the mixed-use project, which includes more than 640 residential units, more than 40 retail and restaurant establishments, the 71,500-square-foot Rockville Library, and new VisArts' Center.

He came home and talked it over with his wife, Sari, who encouraged him to set up shop in Town Square, realizing his 15-year-dream that included opening his start-up restaurant in his hometown of Rockville.

Making it all the more special for Bloch is the fact that he comes into the Square as the owner of the only restaurant with a single location; out of the 25 restaurants making up Town Square, 16 of which have already opened and three with openings near, Bloch's is the only one claiming this distinction.

"We really want Rockville Town Square to feel like a unique retailer. We want shops that no one else has," said Stuart Biel, a leasing agent for Federal Realty and Trust, about Bloch's start-up restaurant. "[Bloch] has an extensive background in the food-service industry. The upside for us is taking a chance on someone who can be a great and unique retailer — better than the downside of not taking the risk."

Bloch did the design work on his new restaurant all on his own. He used no decorator or designer, just an architect.

"It is just a beautiful, fun place," said Mary, a seven-year King Farm resident. "He designed it and put his heart and soul into it. It is all Bobby."

The inside resembles a turn-of-the-century fish market with white octagon floor tiles and antique brick walls. The tables and countertops are made of white marble; wood beams are placed throughout the restaurant. "It has a rustic feel and it's cozy," Bloch said. "I always had a vision of it."

There is some pressure for Bloch; the Chesapeake area is the home of the crab cake, and Marylanders love theirs, accepting only the very best.

So, what is it about these crab cakes that has the town talking?

"I can't tell you, because then it wouldn't be a secret," Bloch jokingly said. "They really are good crab cakes. One secret is there are no fillers: 100 percent jumbo lump crabmeat, a little egg, and a decent blend of seasoning. They are the highest quality — that's what sets them apart."

Along with crab cakes, the menu will include sandwiches, salads, boardwalk

fries, lobster rolls, and shrimp cocktail. "It is not a seafood place, but a crab cake and sandwich place," Bloch said.

"You can't find anyone else doing what he is doing: crab cakes and lobster rolls," said Biel. "That's why we are doing it. It is getting a lot of buzz. Residents from Gaithersburg might come in and also those [customers] from 10, 15, 20 miles away. That's what makes it unique: It is the flavor that [customers] won't be able to find in any other strip center elsewhere."

Part of Bloch's business plan calls on him to open up more dining spots at other locations. "Once we get up and running and work out the kinks in Rockville, we will start looking at other options."

There is carry-out, delivery — including to the communities of King Farm and Falls Grove — and catering services available.

"It has really been a long haul. I had the idea for so long, now it doesn't really seem real," admitted Bloch. "This is a new concept. Who knows what will happen. I can't really imagine, because no one has ever done this."

Bobby's Crabcakes is open for both lunch and dinner: weekdays from 11 a.m. until 9 p.m., weekends from 11 a.m. until 10 p.m., and Sundays from 12 until 8 p.m.

### A Chip Off the Old 'Bloch'

As a former resident of King Farm, Bloch is connected to both communities, moving to Falls Grove in the summer of 2004 with Sari. His parents, who will join him at the restaurant, continue to make their home in King Farm.

"We are here to help wherever Bobby needs us," said Mary Bloch about her son, who has made no secret about the importance of having his family close by his side.

Ron Bloch has cooked a lot over the years, and his son has learned from him, perfecting his crab cake in his dad's very own kitchen; he'll take some of the other recipes he has learned from his dad to his new restaurant.

"My husband shared a lot of his recipes with Bobby, and he will do it in the restaurant, too, by helping in the kitchen a bit," Mary Bloch said. "I think the family involvement sets [the restaurant] apart from others." Bloch's wife, also a lawyer, will do public relations.

The Bloch family is happy to be working in the Square. Though they are dismayed somewhat by the lackluster sales of the condos there, they won't be deterred.

Recently certified, Mary said she has been named by her son as the restaurant's official food and beverage manager.

"If Bobby is away, we are in charge," she said about herself and husband, Ron. "We can watch over things. He feels comfortable having us there."

She thought her past experience working with cash registers would be a benefit, but after a day of training on the "very sophisticated" registers at Bobby's Crabcakes, Mary would rather stay close to patrons frequenting the restaurant. "I plan on staying up front to do PR," she said. "Jack of all trades, but I don't want to touch the equipment!"

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